

Vocational Qualifications (QCF, NVQ, NQF)

Business and Administration (NVQ)

- Level 1 Award Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04702**
- Level 1 Certificate Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04703**
- Level 2 Award Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04704**
- Level 2 Certificate Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04705**
- Level 2 Diploma Business and Administration (NVQ) – **4706**
- Level 3 Certificate Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04707**
- Level 3 Diploma Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04708**
- Level 4 Certificate Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04709**
- Level 4 Diploma Business and Administration (NVQ) – **04710**

Business and Administration

- OCR Level 1 Certificate in Business Administration – **10382**
- OCR Level 2 Diploma in Business Administration – **10383**
- OCR Level 3 Diploma in Business Administration – **10384**
- OCR Level 4 NVQ Diploma in Business Administration – **10385**

Professional Services

- OCR Level 4 NVQ Diploma in Business Administration – **10362**

OCR Report to Centres 2016

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support, which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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Business and Administration (NVQ) – 04702-04710, Business and Administration – 10382-10385 & Professional Services – 10362

1. Overview:

For the last year there have been two sets of qualifications available for Business Administration. The new qualifications are primarily for apprentices and the legacy qualifications are for non apprentices wishing to take a qualification in the subject.

Levels 1-3 of the new qualifications combine the knowledge and competence requirements of traineeship and apprenticeship frameworks. Level 4 is not a combined qualification and for the higher apprenticeship framework, the separate knowledge technical certificate remains available. All new apprentices have to be registered on the new qualifications. OCR state that they intend to develop replacement qualifications for non apprentices that meet the standalone requirements but are likely to be based on the new units. The level 4 Diploma legacy qualifications have closed for registration but the most recent version 10362 remains live for certification.

Understandably the number of registrations on the legacy qualifications has reduced but assessment remains to be of a generally good standard with no significant issues identified. Centres that continue to offer the qualifications regard them as suitable and there are no reports of any problems with the content of the qualifications.

Assessment of the new qualifications has also generally been of a good standard in centres. At level 2 & 3 the qualifications combine the previous knowledge-based technical certificate and competence qualifications into one. Centres choose to deliver this aspect in different ways. It was often the case previously that the technical certificate may be delivered through workshops or taught sessions and assessment may have reflected this approach. Some centres continue with this approach for the relevant units of the new qualifications. Others combine the assessment with the competence elements using methods such as professional discussion or written answers but all in the workplace. Both approaches are acceptable but centres do need to ensure that the learner is able to apply their learning and that knowledge and performance are linked as is the intention of the combined qualification.

Initial assessment is a very important aspect of the qualifications. With many pressures to ensure learners are developing to a higher level of achievement, learners are often registered at a level which appears not to be commensurate with the role they perform. Whilst the knowledge criteria of the qualification can be addressed there are issues being identified with the quality of the competence and performance evidence produced. The evidence does need to meet the criteria and it does cause difficulties for assessors to identify suitable evidence or assessment opportunities. This has been a regular comment from External Quality Assurers (EQAs) from centre visits. Robust initial assessment, to establish the correct level for the learner, as well as explaining the outcome of that assessment to learners remains a crucial aspect of the process. In addition, careful and effective planning of assessments will also help progress through the qualification to be as smooth as possible.

2. General Comments

Level 1: The qualifications at this level have very low levels of registrations and these are often provided in specialist areas for development, learners with special learning needs or those returning to work. They therefore fulfil a very important function. Assessment is generally of good quality. Only a small amount of centres of those monitored have registered learners.

Level 2: Together with level 3 this level continues to provide the bulk of registrations for these qualifications with the vast majority of centres delivering them. The transition to the new qualifications does not appear to have caused any issues overall with assessment being of a good standard and the evidence produced of a good quality. Assessment methods used are appropriate with centres reminded that observation, witness testimony and products are expected to feature strongly for all Business Administration qualifications

Level 3: As with level 2 these form a large part of registrations as they are funded for apprentices and remain a popular qualification for non apprentices. The comments relating to level 2 are equally appropriate to this level with one exception which relates to the knowledge aspects of units and in particular the pure knowledge units within the mandatory group. This is dealt with further in the next section.

Level 4: This level generally has fewer registrations but with the Government push for more higher level apprenticeships being taken there does appear to be an increase with more centres offering the new qualification. As the level 4 qualification, together with the technical certificate, form the qualifications for the Higher Apprenticeship framework learners do have to hold quite a senior position to be able to generate the evidence required. Once again good quality initial assessment is essential to ensure that the learner has the responsibility for the delivery of administration functions as well as appropriate authority and opportunities to be able to generate the evidence required. There have been occasions where this has not been the case. Where it is done the benefits to all parties can be significant in successful achievements and avoiding unrealistic expectations from learners.

For all levels EQAs report that appropriate records have been maintained and internal quality assurance has been appropriate and effective.

3. Comments on Individual Units

Reports and activity on verified visits for these qualifications do not focus on individual units so no specific information is available.

In general assessment of performance has continued to be of a good standard. Some instances have been seen where the evidence for the higher levels does not reflect the requirements of the criteria or the level the learner should be operating within. This links to earlier comments regarding the initial assessment and ensuring that the learners work and levels of responsibility match the level of the qualification they are undertaking. This is the case even at level 3 where learners will need a degree of responsibility to produce suitable evidence of competence. It is entirely possible that a learner will not cover all aspects in their regular work and indeed, it supports development, if they have the opportunities to expand their competence and knowledge. Centres and assessors do need to ensure they work closely with employers to help identify and provide such opportunities and not just try to make the existing work fit. Many centres achieve this through such collaboration and regular assessment planning and reviews.

The new qualifications at levels 2&3, within the mandatory group, contain some detailed knowledge only units that in effect replace the previous technical certificate knowledge based qualification in the apprenticeship framework. Feedback suggests that centres feel the level required is higher than that of the previous qualifications and indeed, at level 3, the assessment

criteria contain command verbs such as analyse and evaluate as well as discuss, explain which feature at all levels. Centres initially had some concerns over how they would evidence these criteria but overall the methods they use have been appropriate. The fact that the qualifications are now combined does provide greater opportunities to link the knowledge with the learner's work environment and work undertaken. Good practice is seen where the learner is encouraged to support, even the most theory based criteria, with examples that demonstrate their full understanding. That said there are units which seek to show the learner has a broad understanding of Business Administration and will require the learner to research topics and areas that will often not relate to their own workplace and role. Generally written answers appear to be the most common approach to the assessment of these units and other knowledge criteria, particularly where the criteria is theory based, and require the learner to research or learn about the topic. Centres will also use professional discussion and where they can link to other criteria, questioning during observation or walk and talks are used.

Early indications in the assessment of these units did raise concerns about whether the level of knowledge being evidenced addressed the correct level required and in particular the command verbs used. This has proved a valid concern now that a lot more assessment has been conducted. Level 2 is generally met well but there are still some concerns that often lists are produced when the learner is required to explain or describe. At Level 3 it is often commented by EQAs that command verbs are not being met and certainly when the verb is evaluate and analyse. Short answers are often seen which cannot possibly fully compare the advantages and limitations of a subject, process or theory. Centres do need to ensure that the evidence they accept fully meets the requirements of the criteria, learning outcome and units and is a reflection of the level of qualification being taken. Good practice has been seen where workbooks are developed with tasks that lead the learner along a path that produces suitable work by such activities as case studies or research projects.

4. Sector Update

Generally as a cross sector suite there is no direct legislation that affects the qualifications that would not be reflected in the assessment such as knowledge of new legislation that may affect the workplace which all employees should be aware of but is not specifically relating to the sector itself.

The Government's Implementation Plan for Apprenticeships is underway with Trailblazer activity ongoing and transition to full implementation during 2015-17. New apprenticeships standards and assessment plans are due to be released and these are not expected to contain mandatory qualifications. Independent end point assessment will form the main focus for the final assessment and awarding of the apprenticeship. Funding is due to be withdrawn for the frameworks over the next 2-3 years but at this time it is not known when that will take place for the Business Administration frameworks but it will have an impact on the use of these qualifications.

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